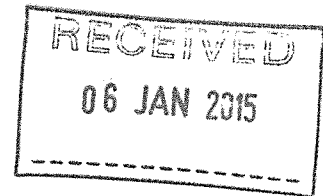




HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA



The Review Officer (Colchester)  
Local Government Boundary Commission for England  
Layden House  
76-86 Turnmill Street  
London EC1M 5LG

5<sup>th</sup> January 2015

Dear Sirs,

**Colchester Borough Council – proposed new boundaries**

Further to my earlier correspondence and our meeting at the House of Commons, for which I am most grateful, I now write formally to comment on the proposals for a 51-member Borough Council.

I have previously indicated my opposition to the reduction from 60 Councillors, and I recognise that as a consequence this has placed the Boundary Commission in an impossible task to create Wards across the Boundary – urban and rural – which in every instance represent areas where the “community of interest” is recognisable to those who live there.

I will concentrate my comments on my Colchester Parliamentary Constituency, that is the historic Borough of Colchester whose boundaries have remained intact at local government level for more than 800 years. What is now proposed will destroy that historic association!

Further, it will cause even greater confusion for residents than currently is the case between geographic areas of local government administration and Parliamentary representation.

But we are where we are! And it is a case of trying to make the best we can of the cards you have been dealt with.

With all due modesty, having for 44 years held continuous elected office in Colchester – 31 years a Councillor, former Mayor and Leader of the Council, and now the Town’s Member of Parliament – my knowledge of the democratic scene in Britain’s Oldest Recorded Town is something which I hope the Commissioners will take seriously with my submission.

1 – the dismembering of New Town Ward (which I represented for 31 years) is the worst feature of the proposals, with the current Ward disappearing and its residents ending up in three different wards where the “community of interest” is minimal at best.



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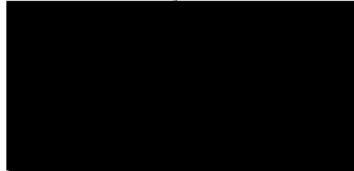
- 2 – I would observe that the Parish Church of “New Town” – and the nearby Junior School bearing the words “New Town” in its title – would be in Berechurch Ward whereas the greater part of this area of Colchester known to everyone as “New Town” would be in a Ward called “Christ Church” with which it has no community of interest! I therefore request that the “St George’s” area of New Town Ward is NOT transferred to Berechurch Ward.
- 3 – In addition to retaining the “St George’s” area within the greater part of New Town Ward, it is further requested that the new ward should be called “New Town and Christ Church” so as to retain, as far as possible, the community of interest within New Town and to emphasise its separate identity as a long-established area of Colchester (it is older than the Christ Church area).
- 4 – I would argue that the “numbers game” between Berechurch Ward and the population of the combined areas of my suggested “New Town and Christ Church” Ward should be regarded as being of less significance than the retention of the “St George’s” area with the greater part of New Town.
- 5 – Ipswich Road is the logical boundary between Highwoods Ward (to the west) and the new Ward of St John’s and St Anne’s (to the east). It is illogical for the Church of St John’s and St John’s School to be placed in Highwoods Ward when both they and the immediate residential neighbourhood are clearly integral to the St John’s area of Colchester. Thus they should not be moved into Highwoods Ward.
- 6 – I recommend that the new ward of Greenstead should be re-named “Greenstead and Longridge” as the latter since its development has always been regarded as a separate neighbourhood to that of the adjoining Greenstead Estate.
- 7 – I object to the inclusion of Rowhedge (East Donyland) in Old Heath Ward on the basis that this village is not in my Parliamentary constituency. And I object to the merger of Lexden and Braiswick, which are two distinct communities in my constituency, and their inclusion with villages outside my constituency to make a new ward which is artificial in every respect.

In conclusion, other than reverting to 60 Councillors (I would argue that with such a fast growing population there is a case to be made to increase the number to 63 or 66) I recognise that the Commissioners have an impossible task.



I trust that the recommendations I have made will be adopted by the Commissioners as being the best of dealing with a situation which I regret is not in the best interests of local government representation for my constituents.

Yours sincerely,



Sir Bob Russell,  
MP for Colchester

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**DATA PROTECTION ACT**

Whilst Sir Bob Russell MP will treat as confidential any personal information you pass on, he will allow staff and authorised volunteers to see if this is needed to help and advise you. He may also pass on all or some of this information to agencies such as Government Departments, the Inland Revenue or the local Council if this is necessary to help you with your case. Sir Bob Russell MP may wish to write to you from time to time to keep you informed on issues that you may find of interest. Please let him know if you do not wish to be contacted for this purpose.